

Wallowa Resources Annual Report • 2015

Stewardship
Community
Education



**WALLOWA
RESOURCES**

Wallowa Resources

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Place-Based Conservation to Enhance Rural Landscapes & Economies

Wallowa Resources worked throughout 2015 to caretake the things that sustain us: our land and forests, clean air and water, and our vibrant rural culture and economy. Over the years, Wallowa Resources has demonstrated that rural economic vitality grows when we protect the health of our forests and rangelands.

Wallowa County in Northeastern Oregon is part of a bioregion called the Intermountain West where vast swaths of public land intermingle with private holdings. Nature knows no ownership boundaries, which means that both private and public efforts are needed, together. That's why a Wallowa Resources theme throughout 2015 was a focus on

public/private partnerships. Shared threats such as wildfire are forging new collaborations to achieve common goals.

Not only does restoring and defending our country's working landscapes benefit the people who live in these rural communities, but all citizens gain from healthy open spaces, forests, rangelands, watersheds, and agricultural soils.

Nils D. Christoffersen,
Executive Director

Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition

Giving Voice to Western Rural Leaders in National Policy Actions

Since 2001, Wallowa Resources has served as a steering committee member for a collective of organizations invested in the long-term health and well-being of western rural lands and communities: Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition (RVCC). A key facet of successful land management policies – county, state and federal – is to ensure local residents have a seat at the table in both creating and implementing the policies. Wallowa Resources' success at implementing place-based conservation strategies has served as a role model for other RVCC groups.

In 2015, Wallowa Resources assumed a leadership position and became the fiscal sponsor for the Rural Voices for Conservation Coali-

tion. RVCC is dedicated to creating practical, equitable and sustainable solutions to the ecological and economic problems facing the rural West. Comprised of more than 170 participating groups from 10 western states, RVCC fosters development of collaborative, multi-stakeholder approaches to public lands management.

By working together, the shared interests of smaller rural communities are amplified in national policy discussions. RVCC is instrumental in translating federal land management policies into jobs and rural economic growth, which is a win/win.

Public lands conservation activities include forest and watershed restoration, prescribed fire burns and road and trail maintenance offer stable employment to rural families while providing a valuable public service. To learn more, please visit: <http://www.ruralvoicescoalition.org>



My Blue Mountains Woodland Initiative

Connecting Private Landowners to the Resources They Need to Keep Their Woods Healthy and Reduce Wildfire Risk

This year, Wallowa Resources initiated a new public/private partnership to help preserve woodlands in Oregon's Blue Mountain region, which includes four counties: Baker, Umatilla, Union, and Wallowa.



The new "My Blue Mountains Woodland" initiative connects all those who own and/or oversee forests in this area. Private

landowners, loggers and conservationists work together with federal, state and county agencies to communicate, share resources, and build defenses to growing challenges from a changing climate and the ever-present threat of wildfire.

Landowners are also encouraged to create defensible spaces around dwellings, which includes choosing fire resistant building design and materials, creating reinforced infrastructure for water and power, and performing regular ground maintenance. Key tools for wildfire protection include understory thinning and prescribed burns.

Building the resilience of the Blue Mountain forest ecosystem also includes management strategies for pests, invasive weeds, and water. All of these conservation strategies provide much-needed job opportunities for local residents.



Wallowa Resources works as convener for members of the My Blue Mountains Woodland initiative and provides useful research, organizes gatherings, maintains a website, and manages the Neighbor Network program to create "Fire Adapted Communities," or FAC's. Experienced woodland owners mentor other landowners and offer a helpful hand, lessons learned, and resources.

The initiative includes more than 3000 individuals who own private lands in the Blue Mountains region, and these landowners connect with organizations that include: Oregon Dept. of Forestry, Oregon State Univ Forestry & Natural Resources Extension, USDA Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Oregon Forest Resources Institute, and the American Forest Foundation. More info is available here: <http://mybluemountainswoodland.org>

Wallowa Resources' Community Solutions Inc.

Providing Economic Development & Renewable Energy Services

Wallowa Resources' for-profit arm Community Solutions Inc., works to stimulate jobs and new local revenue. In 2015, WR Community Solutions Inc. continued its work to help landowners, municipalities, nonprofit groups, and local entrepreneurs evaluate and develop business ideas. Economic development services include: research and feasibility studies, grant writing, economic modeling, technology/market assessments, investment opportunities, and product marketing. To date, assistance has helped jumpstart greenhouse and hoop houses, water distribution systems for livestock, agri-tourism, and more.



Two key areas of expertise for Community Solutions Inc. are developing renewable energy and expanding the forest products industry. Community Solutions Inc. works with local companies to produce sustainable forestry products

such as pest-free firewood, densified heating fuels, small diameter posts and poles, and premium landscaping timbers.

Community Solutions Inc. has also championed the multiple benefits of biomass, which is a natural renewable energy solution for forest-rich rural communities. Biomass utilizes abundant waste wood for heat, and modern biomass burners emit very low emissions. This low-cost heat source has proven to be energy and cost efficient. In addition, gathering salvaged wood supports forest health and reduces wildfire risks on private and public lands. Biomass also creates new jobs.



"Wallowa Resources is committed to building local capacity with local resources, while also informing that work with knowledge that is national and indeed international. This combination, which honors local traditions and practices yet seeks to connect and inform them with larger trends and currents, is exactly the kind of work that seems to bring out the best in all who engage in it – moving past long-standing acrimony and gridlock."

– Phil Brick, Miles C. Moore Professor of Political Science at Whitman College

Communities and Forests in Oregon Research Project (CAFOR)

Assessing Climate Change Adaptation in Working Landscapes

Wallowa Resources is engaged in a unique partnership with three university natural resource departments to assess both scientific and sociological approaches to forest resilience in the Blue Mountains ecoregion of northeast Oregon. The challenges faced by private landowners and natural resource-based communities have grown with climate-related risks of catastrophic wildfire and insect outbreaks. The Communities and Forests in Oregon (CAFOR) research project collects data through an interdisciplinary approach that combines remote sensing techniques and aerial imagery with ecological field-based sampling. The CAFOR team then combines that data with behavioral

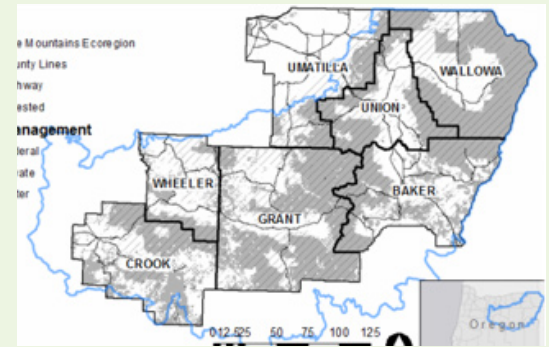


data gleaned from general public and landowner surveys to create a holistic picture of what's working. The team shares insights into how communities can best grapple with new uncertainties due to a changing climate.

Throughout 2015, students and faculty from the University of New Hampshire, University of Colorado and Oregon State University created historic

baseline data on working landscapes in a seven county area that comprises the Blue Mountain ecoregion. Over the next three years, CAFOR researchers will map landscape changes and then superimpose possible disturbances to project/test effective responses help prioritize competent decision-making.

Results from CAFOR research will be shared widely with other rural communities in the Intermountain Northwest, and throughout the US. More information is available here: <http://cafor.weebly.com>



Wallowa Mountain Institute

Hands-On K-12 & College Education Program

The Wallowa Mountain Institute offers robust education programs for local youth and Oregon state college students. Education enrichment programs include immersion in rural environments via hands-on field work, nature tours, and overnight camping trips. To fill school funding gaps, a partnership with the nonprofit Building Healthy Families helps run the Wallowa Resources Exploration of Nature (WREN) program, which engages middle school children in outdoor classrooms that teach practical skills and build a strong sense of place to prepare our future leaders.

University-level education opportunities introduce college students to local ranchers, foresters, and public agency land managers who offer valuable insights into rural values, issues, and problem solving. Recent college partners include Oregon State University, Whitman College and Portland State University.



Irrigation Modernization Campaign

Conserving Water While Generating Small-Scale Hydroelectric Energy

Agriculture is important for our rural economy. The rich soils of the Wallowa valley warm in summer for a short growing season and irrigation is key to maximizing farm production. As concerns over long-term water supplies grow, and average temperatures rise, conserving water is more important than ever. Wallowa Resources' for-profit division, Community Solutions Inc., launched the Irrigation Modernization campaign in 2015 to upgrade the techniques local farmers use to reduce evaporation and mitigate seepage to ensure more water reaches crops.

In addition to conserving precious water, the irrigation project goes a step farther to add renewable energy production to irrigation methods by channeling water through hydroelectric generators. This unique approach conserves energy and brings money-saving efficiencies to farm operations.



New irrigation techniques also enhance in-stream habitat for fish and other aquatic species by removing less water.

Additional studies are underway to explore ways to scale energy production linked with irrigation. Partners in the Irrigation Modernization campaign include: Farmer's Conservation Alliance, Energy Trust of Oregon, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Nez Perce Tribes, Anderson Perry Associates, and Black Rock Consulting.

County Campsite Management

Another Wallowa Resources Community Solutions Inc. venture is a camp management partnership with Wallowa County and the US Forest Service. Community Solutions Inc. administers the operations of more than 100 campsites in Upper Joseph Creek and the Imnaha River areas. In the summer, work includes cleaning, opening, and performing ongoing maintenance of campsites, which are visited by more than 5000 people each year. Following the hunting season, winter work includes closing and weatherizing buildings.



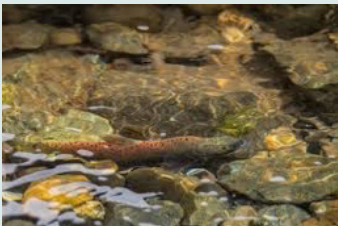
“Warm Hearts, Warm Home” Community Firewood Program

Wallowa Resources participates in a philanthropic program in conjunction with the social service agency Community Connections to deliver free firewood to people in need. Wallowa County residents enrolled in the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program are eligible. More than 30 volunteers help load, deliver and stack the donated 70 truckloads of firewood.



Lick Creek Culvert Replacement Project

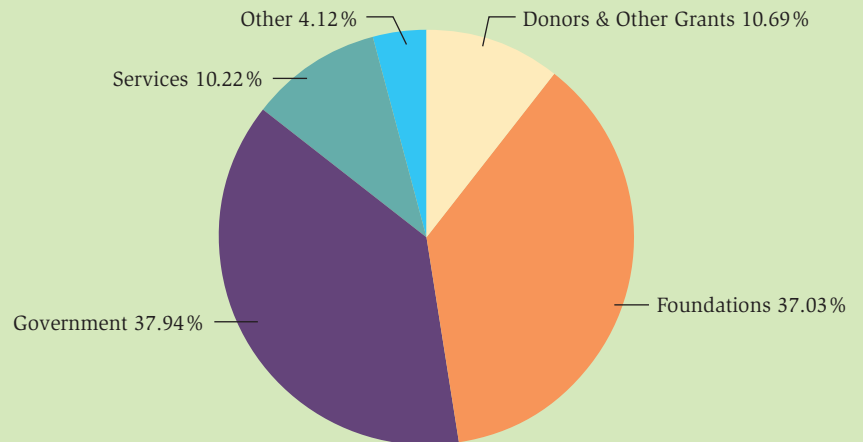
An existing culvert on Lick Creek in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest near Joseph is a fish-passage barrier. The US Forest Service partnered with Wallowa Resources to identify and design an improved structure that will pass aquatic organisms. The culvert will be replaced by a new structure with a simulated stream channel. When completed, the project will open up two miles of upstream spawning and rearing habitat for steelhead, four miles of spawning and rearing habitat for Columbia River bull trout, and one mile of rearing habitat for juvenile Chinook salmon.



Financials

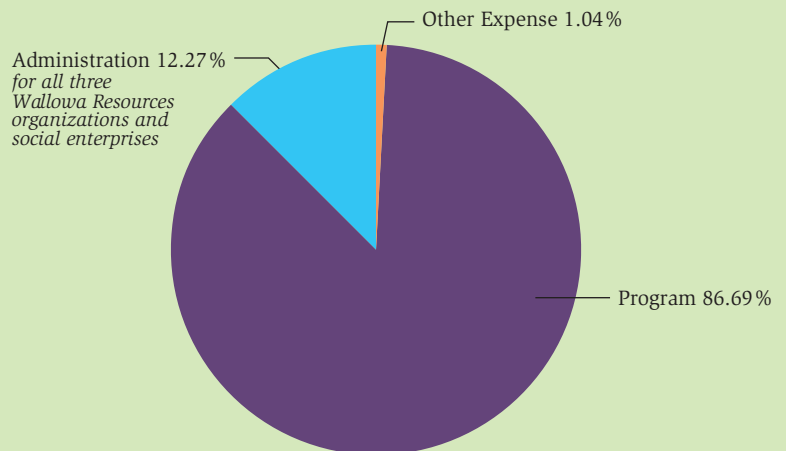
Revenue Summary

Total Revenue for 2015 \$1,252,511



Expense Summary

Total Expenses for 2015 \$1,148,137



Donors & Grantors • 2015

Akita University, Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, American Forest Foundation, Casey Family Fund at OCF, Cycle Oregon, Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization, City of Enterprise, Environmental Protection Agency, Ford Family Foundation, Gray Family Foundation, Bill Healy Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, National Forest Foundation, Oregon Community Foundation (OCF), Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Oregon State University, Oregon State Weed Board, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, Pacific Power Foundation, Portland State University, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Sills Family Foundation, Sustainable Northwest, Swan Valley Connections, Herbert A. Templeton Foundation, Union County, University of Oregon, US Department of Agriculture, US Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, Wallowa County, Wallowa Union Railroad Authority, Watershed Research and Training Center, Warner Family Fund at OCF, Wildhorse Foundation, and Oregon Youth Development Council.